

Message Text

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12

ACTION EB-07

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INFO AMCONSUL ANTWERP

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AMCONSUL ROTTERDAM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMBURG 0610

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: BAGB EEWT ETRN

SUBJECT: GRAIN TRANSSHIPMENTS THROUGH WESTERN EUROPE (C-ER-
YABOUYI)

1. SUMMARY: AFTER DUSCUSSIONS WITH THE HAMBURG PORT
AUTHORITY AND LOCAL GRAIN HANDLERS, WE HAVE CONCLUDED
THAT VIRTUALLY NO GRAIN DESTINED FOR THE USSR IS BEING
TRANSSHIPPED THROUGH HAMBURG. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE
HAS BEEN A MARKED INCREASE IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF
1976 IN TRANSSHIPMENTS OF GRAINDESTINED FOR THE GERMAN
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (GDR). END SUMMARY.

2. ECON/COMM OFFICER CALLED ON HEAD OF THE HAMBURG PORT
AUTHORITY TO REQUEST DATA ON MOVEMENT OF U.S. GRAIN THROUGH
HAMBURG TO THE USSR. THE PORT AUTHORITY WAS EXTREMELY
FORTHCOMING, FURNISHING US WITH FULL DATA FROM 1972
THROUGH 1975 ON ALL U.S. GRAIN AND SOY SHIPMENTS THROUGH
HAMBURG TO ALL OF EASTERN EUROPE. DURING THIS PERIOD,
VIRTUALLY NO U.S. GRAIN AND SOY PRODUCTS WENT TO THE
SOVIET UNION--THE BIGGEST YEAR WAS 1975, WHEN 184 RPT
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184 TONS WENT TO THE USSR OUT OF A TOTAL OF 2,610,078

TONS OF U.S. GRAIN AND SOY PRODUCTS DESTINTED FROM HAMBURG TO THE EAST BLOC. DURING ALL FOUR YEARS FOR WHICH FULL DATA IS AVAILABLE, THE PRINCIPAL RECIPIENT WAS THE GDR (FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1975 2,270,661 TONS) FOLLOWED BY CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

3. A BREAKDOWN OF POINTS OF DESTINATION IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR ANY MONTHS IN 1976 AND PROBABLY WILL NOT BE FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS OR SO. NEVERTHELESS, THE PORT AUTHORITY DID GIVE US A BREAKDOWN OF U.S. GRAIN AND SOY PRODUCT SHIPMENTS INTO HAMBURG FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH FOR THE YEARS 1973 THROUGH 1976. BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED, GRAIN SHIPMENTS FOR THESE THREE MONTHS TOTALLED 652,000 TONS IN 1973, 802,000 TONS IN 1974; 538,000 TONS IN 1975 AND 1,272,000 TONS IN 1976. SOY PRODUCTS TOTALLED 340,000 TONS IN 1973; 411,000 TONS IN 1974; 309,000 TONS IN 1975 AND 279,000 TONS IN 1976. NOTING THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN GRAIN RECEIPTS IN 1976, WE ASKED THE PORT AUTHORITY WHAT THEIR IMPRESSION OF THE OUTFLOW PATTERN WAS. WE WERE TOLD BY THE PORT AUTHORITY THAT ALL OF THIS GRAIN IS BEING HANDLED BY FREIGHT FORWARDERS WHO SPECILIZE IN TRADE WITH THE GDR.

4. OCA OFFICERS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HAMBURG GRAIN FIRM ALFRED C. TOEPFER AND WITH THE HAMBURG GRAIN DEALERS ASSOCIATION. BOTH STATED THAT NO GRAIN IS BEING SHIPPED THROUGH HAMBURG TO THE USSR. THE FOEPFER REPRESENTATIVE ALSO DENIED THAT ANY GRAIN GOING TO THE GDR IS U.S. GRAIN PURCHASED BY THE USSR AND RE-SOLD BY THEM TO THE GDR. THIS GRAIN, HE SAID, IS BEING PAID FOR BY THE EAST GERMANS IN HARD CURRENCY WITH PROMPT SETTLEMENT.

5. WHILE THERE ARE NO DATA TO PROVE THAT HAMBURG IS NOT BEING USED AS STORAGE POINT FOR U.S. GRAIN BEING TRANSSHIPPED TO THE USSR, BOTH THE HISTORICAL PATTERN OF U.S. GRAIN MOVEMENTS THROUGH HAMBURG AND THE UNANIMOUS OPINION OF EXPERTS IN THIS FIELD CONVINCED US THAT IT IS NOT. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GRAIN ASSOCIATION WENT FURTHER, STATING THAT THE SOVIETS ARE SHIPPING GRAIN

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THROUGH ROTTERDAM BECAUSE THEY ARE GETTING "UNDER-THE-TABLE REBATES" ON FREIGHT PRICES IN ROTTERDAM.

6. COMMENT. THE OCA CONVERSATIONS UNCOVERED AN INTERESTING COMPLAINT CONCERNING SHIPMENTS OF U.S. GRAIN TO THE GDR. THE HAMBURG FREIGHT FORWARDING FIRM RICHARD IHLE HAS A MONOPOLY ON THESE SHIPMENTS. OCA INFORMATION IS THAT IHLE IS CONTROLLED BY THE GDR AND STAFFED

PRIMARILY OR EXCLUSIVELY BY MEMBERS OF THE DEUTSCHE
KOMMUNISTISCHE PARTEI (THE WEST GERMAN COMMUNIST
PARTY). OCA SUSPECTS THAT THE LARGE PROFITS IHLE IS
MAKING FROM ITS MONOPOLY ON SHIPMENTS OF U.S. GRAIN
IS HELPING TO FINANCE COMMUNIST PARTY ACTIVITIES IN
WEST GERMANY. OTHER WEST GERMAN FREIGHT FORWARDERS
BITTERLY RESENT THIS MONOPOLY POSITION HELD BY IHLE
AND WOULD LIKE TO FIND A WAY TO BREAK IT. BROGAN

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